

Protests reject decision to not indict Ferguson cop

BY JOHN HAWKINS

FERGUSON, Mo. — On Nov. 24 St. Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCulloch announced the county grand jury declined to indict officer Darren Wilson for the Aug. 9 killing here of unarmed, 18-year-old Michael Brown.

The announcement was met with demonstrations here and throughout the country that drew attention to other cases of cop brutality against working people and the disproportionate number of victims who are young Black men. The reach of the protests went as far as London, England, where the featured speakers were Carole Duggan, aunt of Mark Duggan who was fatally shot by a police officer in August 2011, and Marcia Rigg, sister of Sean Rigg, who died in police custody at Brixton police station in 2008.

“I’m sorely disappointed by the
Continued on page 9

Sankara at center of DC forum discussion

BY MAGGIE TROWE AND NED MEASEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Two weeks after demonstrations across Burkina Faso forced President Blaise Compaoré out of power, a Nov. 15 meeting here brought together 150 people from a broad range of political backgrounds to discuss the events and the political legacy of Thomas Sankara, central leader of the 1983-87 revolution in that West African country.

The popular democratic revolution Sankara led accomplished a great deal in just a few years before it was overthrown in a 1987 coup that brought Compaoré to power. It nationalized the land to guarantee rural toilers the fruits of their labor; organized literacy and immunization campaigns and made basic health care available to millions; launched mass tree-planting and irrigation projects to roll back
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Walmart actions back \$15/hr, full-time work

DC area workers from 7 stores speak out, sit in



Workers from seven stores sit in at H Street Walmart in Washington, D.C., Nov. 26. Solidarity actions were held at hundreds of Walmart stores across the country Nov. 26 to 28.

BY NED MEASEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — I had just returned to work at Walmart on Georgia Avenue here after taking part in the three-day strike organized by OUR Walmart, a union-backed nationwide campaign fighting for \$15 and full-time work. “Why didn’t you

have a sit-in at this store?” a co-worker asked, referring to prominent news coverage about a sit-in strike action at the H Street location. “You should have!”

A couple dozen workers from seven stores formed the backbone of Nov. 26 to 28 activities in the D.C. metro area, which were part of strike and protest actions across the country against the retail giant that has come to symbolize the broad assault on wages and working conditions of millions in the U.S. The second largest private company in the world, Walmart makes \$16 billion in annual profit and has 1.3 million employees at 4,900 stores in the U.S. alone.

Walmart workers active in the Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart) are demanding \$15 per hour, full-time employment with consistent schedules,
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Regime under Moscow control moves to silence Crimean Tatars



Despite ban by Moscow, May 18 rally commemorating 70th anniversary of Stalin’s deportations of Crimean Tatars was held at alternate location near Simferopol, Crimea, above. Moscow-imposed regime has now banned annual Dec. 10 Human Rights Day rally in Crimea.

BY JOHN STUDER

The government of Crimea — under Moscow’s control since Russian troops occupied and annexed the peninsula Feb. 28 — has banned an annual Dec. 10 Human Rights Day rally called by the Mejlis, the elected council of the Crimean Tatar people. The move the latest effort in an ongoing campaign by Moscow to intimidate and silence the Tatars, an oppressed nationality native to the area.

“For years we have traditionally conducted mass events, in particular rallies, dedicated to the problems of Crimean Tatar people,” Mejlis rep-

resentative Nariman Dzhelal told the press in Simferopol Dec. 2. “But things have changed. The authorities made it clear that the Mejlis will not be allowed to hold any mass events Dec. 10 or any other day.”

Russian troops moved on Crimea, which was part of Ukraine, following the Maidan mobilizations that led to the overthrow of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Authorities have since banned Crimean Tatar protests, exiled Mustafa Dzhemilev, Refat Chubarov and other Mejlis lead-

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Bosses’ profit drive kills 4 workers in 8 days in Alberta

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ AND JOE YOUNG

CALGARY, Alberta — Four construction workers were killed on the job in the space of eight days in the province, drawing attention to the deadly consequences of the bosses’ profit drive here.

On Nov. 18, James Ladino, 40, of Edmonton was struck in the head by a machine he was using to install a sewer line. He died the next day.

On Nov. 20 an unidentified 60-year-old man was crushed to death when a wall collapsed as he was installing a loading door here. He was working for employment agency Blue Collar

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As we go to press
Fast-food workers are preparing for nationwide protests Dec. 4 demanding \$15/hour and a union
“We get paid so little and do so much work. I’m here to support you.”
—Desiree Kimbrough, McDonald’s worker speaking at Miami Walmart rally.

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Los Angeles port truckers make gains in 8-day strike

Solidarity boosts locked out Texas aluminum workers

Boston school bus drivers: Drop frame-up charges!

SKorea move to ban party undermines workers rights

BY SETH GALINSKY

On Nov. 25 the Constitutional Court in Seoul heard closing arguments in the South Korean government’s attempt to outlaw the opposition Unified Progressive Party. The proposed ban is part of a campaign by President Park Geun-hye and her New Frontier Party against workers’ rights, including freedom of speech and association.

The move to ban the party — which holds five seats in the 300 member National Assembly — goes hand in hand with an ongoing attempt to take away legal recognition of the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union.

“The Unified Progressive Party is a cancer that wants to destroy the Republic of Korea from within,” Minister of Justice Hwang Kyo-ahn told the Constitutional Court. Under South Korean law, the court has the final say on whether the party is allowed to function legally.

The opposition party’s call for “progressive democracy,” the government asserted, is “the first stage in achieving North Korean-style socialism.”

In its brief to the court, the Ministry of Justice listed more than half a dozen protest movements over the last 15 years that it claimed were manipulated by agents of the North Korean government. Among them: protests against a U.S. bombing range in Maehyang Village in 2000; protests after two middle school students were crushed to death by a U.S. military armored vehicle in 2002; protests in 2005 and 2006 against the U.S. military base in Pyeongtaek; calls in 2005 to tear down a statue of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, head of the U.S. occupation force in Korea after World

War II; and opposition to the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement in 2006, the daily *Hankyoreh* wrote in September.

“The very act of presenting a difference of political opinion as ‘hostile actions’ is what undermines democracy,” Unified Progressive Party Chairwoman Lee Jung-hee told the court, answering government charges.

Government officials asked the court to outlaw the opposition party in November 2013, after arresting Rep. Lee Seok-ki and other party members, charging them with seditious conspiracy — plotting an insurrection — and violation of the National Security Law, which makes it illegal to sympathize with “anti-state groups.” The case against Lee was based on two speeches he gave in May 2013 and testimony by a government informant who claimed that Lee set up a secret Revolutionary Organization.

Inaccurate transcripts of Lee’s speeches submitted by the government included distortions of what he said. According to Gregory Elich, writing in *CounterPunch*, the government later corrected the transcripts in 272 places. For example, the transcript first said that Lee called for “carrying out holy war.” The corrected version changed that to “carrying out promotion.”

In February this year, South Korean Judge Kim Jung-woon found Lee and six other members of the Unified Progressive Party guilty of the two main charges. Lee was sentenced to 12 years in prison plus an additional 10-year ban on running for office.

In August the ninth criminal division of the Seoul High Court overturned the conspiracy charge of plotting an insur-



Feb. 23 protest in Seoul against South Korean government attacks on Unified Progressive Party. Frame-up and jailing of party leaders threatens right to free speech and association.

rection but upheld the conviction of incitement and violation of the National Security Law, reducing Lee’s sentence to nine years. Judge Lee Min-geol said that he had “suspicions” that the Revolutionary Organization was an invention of the prosecution. The case will now go to the Supreme Court.

There have been some demonstrations against government persecution of Lee Seok-ki and the Unified Progressive Party, but other opposition parties and most trade union officials have been silent.

“This must change,” In Jae-geun, a National Assembly member from the New Politics Alliance for Democracy,

the main bourgeois opposition party, said at a “Roundtable to Guard Democracy and Oppose the Forced Dissolution of the Unified Progressive Party,” held in Seoul Nov. 6. “We cannot allow further retreat of democracy.”

Meanwhile, the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union has held off government attempts to close down the union. In October 2013 the labor ministry stripped the union of its legal status for violating anti-union laws by allowing fired teachers to remain in the union.

The Seoul High Court Sept. 19 extended an injunction preventing the government from outlawing the union for the time being.

Bosses’ blood money ‘handouts’ go to party Capital Fund

Several United Airlines airport workers from San Francisco recently turned over \$205 to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund from so-called customer satisfaction bonuses. “Of course many air travelers are having an increasingly difficult, unpleasant and more expensive ‘travel experience,’” wrote Carole Lesnick in a note accompanying her check for \$97. “The company gives ‘productivity’ bonuses to Machinists-organized workers for ‘safety’ and on-time performance in hopes that these little handouts will discourage us from fighting for real job safety and a better contract.

“United Airlines held a program to celebrate a national safety award given to the San Francisco facility,” she wrote. “Most of the workers in my department consider it a farce and did not attend.”

Another \$377.75 was received from Dave Ferguson, a Yamaha worker in Newnan, Georgia, and \$29.87 from “profit sharing” from Wendy Banen, a Home Depot worker in New York. Contributions from production, safety and other “bonuses” from the bosses — designed to bribe workers to accept concessions, speedup and wage cuts — are referred to as “blood money” by supporters of the communist movement who turn them over to the party’s Capital Fund. These steady blood money contributions are an important political foundation for the fund, which helps finance the party’s long-range work. To contribute, see page 8 for a *Militant* distributor near you.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Solidarity with student, worker protests in Mexico

Protests have swept Mexico since Iguala municipal cops “disappeared” 43 college students Sept 26. Working people in Mexico refuse to stay silent in face of killings and disappearances at hands of police, military and drug gangs. The ‘Militant’ covers their fight.

AP photo/Rebecca Blackwell
Nov. 20 Mexico City protest against disappearance of 43 students by police in Iguala.

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2 The Militant December 15, 2014

Health workers strike for pay, against cuts in UK

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON — Members of health unions in England and Northern Ireland walked off the job for four hours Nov. 24 demanding the government pay all National Health Service staff a 1 percent wage increase recommended by the NHS Pay Review Body. Some 60 percent are not getting this raise, however, as the government is excluding those getting annual incremental raises.

The action was the second such protest this year and took place against the backdrop of growing media attention on the crisis in the state-run health care system, which includes budget cuts, declining quality of care and escalating medical staff workloads.

Lively picket lines were set up outside hospitals and ambulance stations. “We’ll need to keep taking action until they pay us,” said Julie Beattie, a union steward for the Royal College of Midwives at the

Royal Oldham Hospital. The RCM conducted its first strike ballot earlier this year. NHS workers will be “working to rule” for the next four days, Beattie said, taking their breaks and not doing unpaid overtime.

“The problem with health care is people running it are in Ivory Towers, thinking of pound [£] signs, not the patients and those who work for the health service,” said Steve Kilduff, a Unison steward at Tameside General Hospital in Greater Manchester. “There’s less staff to look after more patients with fewer beds. Its devastating.”

Meanwhile, the BBC reported Nov. 26 on findings by the King’s Fund, a think tank dedicated to the NHS budget. “Unless more money is found a financial crisis is inevitable next year and patients will bear the cost as waiting times rise and quality of care deteriorates,” King’s Fund Chief Executive Chris Ham said.

The *Daily Telegraph* reported Nov. 21 on the growing waiting times for emergency care in England: “Last week, more than 6,000 were forced to wait up to 12 hours on trolleys, compared with 2,596 in the same week in 2013.”

The Colchester Hospital in Essex has come under scrutiny after reporting 563 serious incidents over two years. Most recently a major incident was declared, according to the *Guardian*, after a surprise inspection of one ward found alleged “inappropriate restraint, resuscitation and sedation of elderly people, some with dementia.”



Members of the Royal College of Midwives picket in Manchester, England, Nov. 24.

Demonstrations in Haiti protest delayed elections



Since late October, tens of thousands in Haiti have poured into the streets to protest delayed elections and demand the resignation of President Michel Martelly. Above, Nov. 18 march.

Crowds marched through the capital, Port-au-Prince, Nov. 25 calling for the release of more than two dozen people arrested during recent protests.

Martelly, a businessman and former musician, was allied with the U.S.-backed Duvalier dictatorship that held power from 1957 to 1986. There have been no elections in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, since 2011. Demonstrators have dubbed the recent protests “Operation Burkina Faso,” referring to the mass popular demonstrations that drove Blaise Compaoré from power in that West African country in late October.

— MAGGIE TROWE

Four killed on job in Alberta

Continued from front page

Temps at Norcal Construction.

On Nov. 21 in St. Albert, near Edmonton, a worker died after falling from a ladder.

On Nov. 25 another worker was killed at Carseland near Calgary, when he was crushed between concrete blocks and a tractor while dismantling a bridge

“Most of these accidents are preventable,” said Jaimie Loewen, a construction worker who lives in the neighbor-

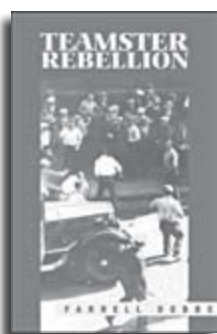
hood where Ladino was killed.

Last July, Chris Lawrence, 15, died in a gravel pit near Drumheller, an hour and a half from Calgary. He was working for Arjon Construction when his clothes got caught and he was pulled under equipment. Under Alberta law it was legal for Lawrence to be employed in construction.

Alberta “is the best place in Canada for employers to get away with unsafe work, and remains one of the most dangerous places in Canada to be a worker,” said Gil McGowan, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour at an April 28 Day of Mourning ceremony in Edmonton for killed and injured workers.

Alberta has the lowest rate of unionization in Canada at 23.5 percent in 2012. The Canadian average was 31.5 percent. The labor movement here was weakened during an offensive against the construction unions in the 1980s. Taking advantage of a major downturn in the economy, employers locked out all construction trades from their jobs on June 16, 1984, and got the help of the Alberta government to tear up union contracts. The recent construction deaths show how workers in the province continue to pay with their lives.

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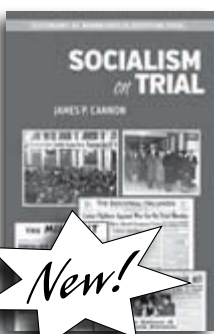


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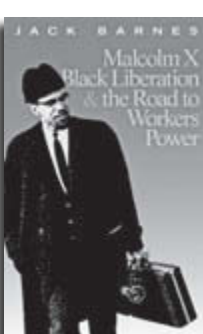
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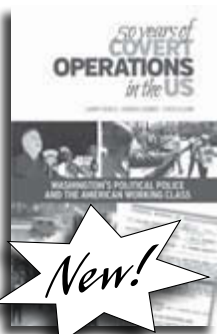
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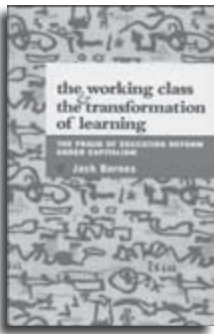
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Israel-Palestine Conflict: No Military Solution Is Possible; Urgent Need for Negotiated Solution. Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. 4804 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

Class Struggle in Bangladesh, A First-hand Account. Speaker: Emma Johnson, part of international *Militant* reporting team to Bangladesh. Fri., Dec. 12, 6 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301 Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Tel.: 0161 478 2496.

Solidarity actions boost fighters at Walmart

Protests demanding \$15 per hour, full-time work, and dignity on the job took place at hundreds of Walmart stores across the country on Black Friday, Nov. 28. Unions, political organizations, religious groups, students and others joined in. In many cities Walmart workers, members of OUR Walmart, went on strike, joining actions at stores where they work and others nearby.

Militant readers joined these actions and report from several cities.

LOS ANGELES

Some 350 picketers, including many workers from Walmart stores in the area, lined both sides of the street outside the downtown Long Beach Walmart Nov. 28, joined by members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, Service Employees International Union and other unions.

A large group of young people, part of the campaign to raise the minimum wage for fast-food and other service workers, took part.

“Every time you get a raise they cut your hours and take away benefits,” Sandra Jensen, who works at Walmart’s Sam’s Club in Fullerton, told the *Militant*. “You can’t maintain a family on the pay. If you speak up they threaten you.”

Mary Ann Moreno, a Walmart worker in Rosemead, said, “This fight is about respect. If you complain they tell you there’s 300 other people that want your job, and if you don’t like it you can walk out the door.”

— Wendy Lyons

CHICAGO

Cheered by the crowd, strikers from the Chatham Walmart on the South Side sat down in the street by the downtown Chicago store until they were ticketed by the police.

“About 20 to 30 of us walked out of work on Wednesday on a three-day strike,” Keyon Somthers, 24, one of the Chatham strikers, told the *Militant*. They



Aylen Mercado

500 joined Black Friday protest outside Walmart in St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 28. Action supported Walmart workers and janitors at other retail stores.

visited pickets at other stores on Black Friday. “The cost of living went up, but the wages didn’t. I started at \$8.35 an hour. Walmart encourages workers to go to college. I am a college student, and there is no way I can pay for school on the wages.”

— Alyson Kennedy and Laura Anderson

MIAMI

“We’re on strike since yesterday asking Walmart to stop abuse and bullying of workers,” Oswaldo Alonso told more than 40 people outside the North Miami Beach store Nov. 28. Half a dozen Walmart strikers and about 40 supporters took part in the action.

“After four years I’m getting \$9.10 an hour,” said Marie Michel, who works overnight stocking shelves. “I have four kids. With Walmart doing so well I’d like to be paid enough to take care of them. There’s no respect for workers inside the store.”

Desiree Kimbrough, a McDonald’s worker fighting for \$15 per hour, told the rally, “We get paid so little and do so much work. I’m here to support you.” She and other fast-food workers will be holding strikes and rallies Dec. 4.

— Naomi Craine

NORTH BERGEN, NEW JERSEY

More than 150 people picketed the North Bergen, New Jersey, Walmart on

Black Friday.

“It matters to all of us,” Dennis Hart, 42, a member of Iron Workers Local 40, told the *Militant*. “This is the baseline on wages. If the hole falls through the floor, we all fall through.”

Members of other unions were present, including the American Federation of Teachers, American Postal Workers Union, Teamsters, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, and Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

Tiffany Foster, from the American Postal Workers Union, said her union was participating at every Black Friday Walmart protest across the country.

— Jacob Perasso

DC Walmart workers: \$15 an hour, full-time jobs

Continued from front page

an end to understaffing, adjusted work assignments for pregnant employees and dignity on the job. The group is actively supported by the United Food and Commercial Workers. Here in D.C. we work with UFCW Local 400, which organizes Giant and Safeway grocery workers, who face similar issues.

The biggest actions took place Nov. 28 on Black Friday, which traditionally kicks off the annual holiday shopping spree that every retailer hopes will put them “in the black” and ahead of their competition. Here some 300 strikers and their supporters — including Teamsters, teachers and members of the Communication Workers of America — gathered at 8 a.m. on Friday at Amtrak’s Union Station for a rally before marching to the H Street store.

A carload of strikers from Newport News, Virginia, joined the Black Friday action here, which was also backed by Jobs with Justice, Respect DC and DC Ferguson.

“At least \$15, no part-time, cease harassment, firing and intimidation,” Reverend Graylan Hagler of Plymouth Congregation United Church of Christ told rally participants. “People will not give up power unless we organize. That’s my prayer.”

“Everyday, average Americans are unjustly fired,” said Cynthia Murray, 58, a rank-and-file leader of the campaign who has been part of five strikes against Walmart. Murray called for 4 1/2 minutes of silence for Michael Brown. “From the police and prosecutors in Ferguson to Walmart and its owners, the abuse of power by a few is keeping the

majority down,” she said.

Other speakers included Tefere Gebre, executive vice president of the AFL-CIO.

“We have our own struggles for safe and sustainable work schedules, and we stand in solidarity with Walmart workers,” Fritz Edler, an Amtrak engineer and local chairman for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen who attended the protest, told the *Militant*.

The author of this article was part of a group of strikers drawn from seven stores in Washington and the surrounding area in Virginia and Maryland who spent all day Wednesday, Nov. 26, at three different stores to support actions and garner support from workers and shoppers.

At Walmart in Laurel, Maryland, workers walked off the job together. For at least half an hour, strikers carried out a sit-down strike in the main aisle of the H Street store. Others distributed flyers to workers and customers. With managers present and paying close attention, most workers on the job appeared to ignore the action. At the same time, many customers took flyers and several read them on the spot. Some gave smiles, nods, or thumbs up.

After the H Street action, the group gathered at a nearby coffee shop. A Walmart worker on break approached us to find out more. She thought seriously for a few minutes about walking out and joining us. She returned to work, but not before leaving her contact information so we can meet later.

That afternoon we walked through a store in Alexandria, Virginia, with signs. Fatmata Jabbie, a cashier there led the march. “It was the best experience,” Jabbie, 21, said later. “It makes me feel like fighting for everyone, not just me.”

On Thanksgiving at 7:30 pm, OUR Walmart strikers and their supporters,

Continued on page 9

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 15, 1989

Millions in East Germany and Czechoslovakia continue to press the fight to rid themselves of repressive structures, restrictions and the domination of Stalinist Communist parties. They are part of the struggle for democratic rights that is sweeping Eastern Europe and that has won the admiration of working people around the world.

The Communist parties, the instruments of iron rule by the privileged bureaucratic castes for more than 40 years, are shattering; and the privileged layers are attempting to find alternative means to maintain their domination in a much more unstable framework.

For the first time in decades, the door for working people to engage in political discussion, debate, activity and organization is beginning to open.



December 14, 1964

BERKELEY, Dec. 7 — Mario Savio, leader of the Free Speech Movement (FSM), was dragged from the speakers’ platform by campus police in front of 18,000 students in the Greek Theater.

After a song fest led by folk singer Joan Baez, the sit-inners had occupied the administration building at noon, Dec. 2 to protest the administration’s continuing harassment of FSM leaders because of earlier demonstrations. On Thursday, Dec. 3, “liberal” Gov. Edmund Brown ordered 600 cops to smash the sit-in. The cops dragged 800 students to jails throughout Oakland and Berkeley.

The students in unprecedented strength, countered with a general strike at the university, establishing picket lines around most university buildings.



December 16, 1939

The agreement signed by the Chrysler Corporation and United Automobile Workers (CIO) ending the 54-day “lockout” represents a major development for the American labor movement. The calamity-howlers who have been predicting the death of the CIO and its proudest acquisition, the auto workers union, received a major disappointment. Confronted with a major attack by one of the “Big Three” of the auto industry, the UAW-CIO emerged from the conflict, a formidable power.

The Chrysler Corporation entertained some extravagant illusions regarding the union. The auto barons believed — they hoped — that the union had been weakened and disintegrated by years of internal struggle and unemployment.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Appeal to fast-food workers to write about their fight

Fast-food workers and their supporters will be holding strikes and rallies for “\$15 and a union” Dec. 4 across the country. The *Militant* is covering this fight, giving a voice to those involved. Send articles or letters, quotes and photos to me at: 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or themilitant@mac.com; or call 212-244-4899.

—Maggie Trowe

Los Angeles port truckers make gains in eight-day strike

LOS ANGELES — Drivers for seven trucking companies who move containers from the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports have ended more than a week of job actions after all the companies agreed to negotiate with the Teamsters union. An eighth company, Green Fleet, agreed to negotiate before the strike.

The workers are demanding union representation and an end to the bosses’ scheme to keep them divided and more exploitable as so-called independent contractors.

On Nov. 15, two days after drivers struck Total Transportation Services Inc. and Pacific 9 Transportation Co., the two companies agreed to negotiate. The strike expanded to Quality Transportation Services Inc., LACA Express and WinWin Logistics two days later, then to Pacer Cartage and Harbor Rail Transport. By Nov. 21, all of the companies had agreed to meet with the union, and the picket lines came down.

The strikers picketed rail and port terminals that accepted trucks driven by strikebreakers. Most port terminals turned away scab trucks to avoid pickets.

When bosses at International Transportation Service accepted a struck company’s trucks Nov. 19, they were hit with an expanded picket, causing long lines at the facility.

In the pre-holiday period of increased port activity, shipping bosses, already contending with massive congestion and a contract fight with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, put pressure on trucking companies to end the dispute.

“We made some progress,” Daniel Linares, 58, a driver at Pacific 9 Transportation, told the *Militant*. “This will mean better wages and benefits for the drivers who come after us.”

—Bill Arth

Solidarity boosts Texas aluminum workers locked out since October

GREGORY, Texas — Solidarity has boosted the determination of 450 members of United Steelworkers Local 235A locked out by Sherwin Alumina here since Oct. 11. The company has hired



Militant/Catharina Tirsén

Food workers, members of 800-strong GMB union local, toot horns on picket line during two-day strike against United Biscuits plant in Liverpool, England, Nov. 23.

strikebreakers to extract aluminum oxide from bauxite ore at the plant, located near Corpus Christi.

The company’s “last and final offer” included cuts in overtime pay for unscheduled work, increased health care premiums, elimination of health care for retirees, and no pension, disability and widows’ benefits for new hires. It was voted down by 98 percent Oct. 10.

“Sherwin is trying to degrade us or drive us out or both,” said David Pohlers at the picket line.

Five union workers from Noranda Alumina (formerly Kaiser) in Gramercy, Louisiana, cooked a pot of jambalaya for locked-out workers and supporters Nov. 22. From 1998 to 2000 some 3,000 workers struck and then were locked out by Kaiser at five plants in three states.

“There’s power in unity,” said Claude Forsythe, one of the Noranda workers, at the feast. “We’re kindred spirits.”

Locked-out Sherwin workers and supporters picketed Nov. 19 outside the Houston offices of Glencore, Sherwin’s parent company and one of the world’s largest natural resources companies.

—Bernie Senter

Florida bus drivers demand long-delayed ‘step raises’

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Some 75 bus drivers, many members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1577, and supporters picketed county government buildings here Nov. 18 demanding long-delayed “step raises” stipulated in their contract, but put on hold during the recession in 2008.

“It’s bait-and-switch,” Ken Brown told the *Militant*, holding a copy of the contract listing annual hourly raises totaling nearly \$10 over the first five years of service. Starting pay for drivers is \$13.70 per hour. “They say no county employees have gotten a raise for the last five years, but we learned the firefighters did.”

“All of management is at top pay,” said driver Tom Romano, “but the bus drivers can’t get a step raise.”

After picketing, some 50 drivers and their supporters packed into the County Commission meeting. One driver after another took the floor to present their grievances.

“I’m a single mom,” extra board driver Yvette Balom said, “and all I’m asking for is the top pay I was promised.”

County and transit administrators claim the union lost step raises in arbitration, but agreed to hold another meeting on the issue, this time closed to public comment.

“The picket expanded solidarity for our struggle,” Dwight Mattingly, Local 1577 president, told the *Militant*. “That means more than the meeting with the commission.”

—Naomi Craine



Reynaldo Herrera

Members of United Steelworkers in Gregory, Texas, locked out by Sherwin Alumina since Oct. 11, received solidarity at “family day” picket Oct. 25, and from Louisiana aluminum workers.

Boston school bus drivers: ‘Drop frame-up charges’

BOSTON — “Drop the frame-up charges! Now!” chanted 100 school bus drivers, members of United Steelworkers Local 8751, and supporters of Steve Kirschbaum, the local’s grievance committee chairperson, as they rallied on the steps of the Dorchester District Court here Nov. 24. Kirschbaum faces charges of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and criminal trespass. The charges stem from a union meeting held on company property June 30, the day the union’s agreement with Veolia, now called Transdev, expired.

That day some 200 members and supporters of the local held a rally at the Veolia school bus yard in Dorchester, followed by a meeting on contract negotiations in the building’s drivers’ room. Prosecutors charge Kirschbaum forced the door open, “assaulting” Manager Angela Griffin “with a dangerous weapon” by pushing a table into her.

At the opening of Kirschbaum’s trial, defense lawyers filed a motion to dismiss, presenting records of text messages sent by Veolia officials showing they were monitoring every movement by union members on company property, with no mention of an assault by Kirschbaum. Judge Jonathan Tynes took the motion under advisement. The trial resumes Feb. 2.

Kirschbaum is one of four current and past union officials of the local fired for instigating an “illegal strike” last year.

—Ted Leonard

Striking mechanics win wage raise in Oakland, California

OAKLAND, Calif. — After five days on strike, 14 mechanics at Cromer Equipment here won a wage increase of \$3.85 an hour over four years and a reduction of health care expenses.

The workers, members of International Association of Machinists Local 1546, repair forklifts and other industrial equipment. They had not gotten a raise for nearly five years.

“We discussed it together and came to the conclusion that enough is enough,” mechanic Mel Lopez told the *Militant*. Picket lines went up Nov. 12.

Still unresolved is the workers’ demand that the company cease sending repair work to nonunion shops.

“I can see that union efforts are getting stronger today,” said union member Ben Hernandez. “But we need them to get even stronger. If you don’t have the union your future is in jeopardy.”

—Betsey Stone

Philadelphia airport baggage handlers demand wage hike

PHILADELPHIA — Several dozen baggage handlers who work for PrimeFlight Aviation Services, a subcontractor at the Philadelphia International Airport, struck for one day Nov. 20 and picketed outside the US Airways terminal here. Workers make between \$7.25 and \$8 an hour with no health insurance or sick pay. They are supported by SEIU Local 32BJ, which is working to unionize some 2,000 airport workers employed by subcontractors.

The workers are demanding that the airlines comply with a city referendum passed in May raising the airport minimum wage to \$10.88, and protesting the firing of Misha Williams, who had led a delegation to the company’s office to demand a wage increase.

—Chris Hoepfner

Food workers strike Liverpool biscuits factory

LIVERPOOL, England — More than 100 food workers, members of an 800-strong GMB union local, protested outside the United Biscuits Jacobs factory here Nov. 24 during a two-day strike.

The workers are striking against the company’s demand to impose new rules for the amount of sick leave workers are allowed to take and to schedule work during part of the annual Christmas shutdown. “They want to discredit us and break our union,” Betty Doyle, GMB convener at the plant, told the *Militant*.

Around 300 workers at the plant who are employed by an agency have refused to cross the picket line.

The agency initially threatened to fire the workers who stayed out on strike days, but backed off and recorded their absences as holiday or unpaid leave.

A solidarity delegation from the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers and the Unite union at the United Biscuits plant in Manchester visited the picket line here.

The unionists plan more walkouts in December.

—Paul Davies

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Job protection when layoffs occur

Friday Dec. 12, 1-3 p.m.
San Francisco Int’l Airport
Terminal 2, Departures Level

For info call (415) 864-8770 ext. 777

Discussion on Sankara

Continued from front page

the encroaching Sahara desert; drew women in large numbers into these social campaigns and political life; and built links with anti-imperialist forces around the world.

The celebratory event — titled “Revolution in Burkina Faso and the Downfall of Blaise Compaoré: Significance and Prospects for a New Burkina Faso and a New Africa” — was endorsed by nine political organizations and brought people from the D.C. area, Philadelphia and New York.

Gnaka Lagoke, founder of the Revival of Panaficanism Forum and principal organizer of the meeting, opened the program and welcomed participants, including two diplomats from the Cuban Interests Section here.

“Thomas Sankara built on the Cuban Revolution’s example,” Lagoke said. “Just think of Cuba’s contributions to Africa,” he noted, pointing to Cuba’s military aid to Angola in the fight against the invading forces of apartheid South Africa in the 1970s and ’80s and Cuba’s leadership in responding to the Ebola epidemic today.

More than a third of those in attendance were from West African countries, where millions face governments similar to that of Compaoré — “democratic” façades for de facto military rule backed by Washington, Paris and other imperialist powers.

Impact of Compaoré’s overthrow

“After Burkina Faso, the same thing may happen in Congo, Burundi, Benin or even the Ivory Coast,” said Lagoke, himself a native of Ivory Coast.

The mobilizations “will have an impact on neighboring countries,” Farida Nabourema, 24, a member of the “Faure Most Go” movement, told the *Militant* at the meeting. The group opposes the government of President Faure Gnassingbé in Togo and 47 years of Gnassingbé family rule. Thousands in Togo demonstrated against the regime Nov. 21.

Was the overthrow of Compaoré a revolution? What did it accomplish and what’s next? were among the central questions joined in the civil debate and discussion among the political currents present.

The mobilizations in Burkina Faso represented “a mass uprising, not a revolution,” said Mjiba Frehiwot, a member of the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party and chair of the event. She was responding to participants who argued the opposite. “A revolution means total transformation. For that you have to get rid of imperialism and neocolonialism,” she added.

The army remains in control, protecting the interests of capitalist gold-mining and agricultural giants, exploiting workers and farmers in the resource-rich country of 18 million where 72 percent of the population lives on less than \$2 per day. The officer corps and a small layer of propertied families it serves have been working day and night to cobble together a new regime they hope can demobilize the popular unrest.

Serge “Smokey” Bambara, a leader of Balai Citoyen, a group centrally involved in building the mass protest movement that brought Compaoré down, spoke by teleconference from Ouagadougou, the country’s capital. “We don’t want power, we don’t want to be in government. Our mission is to guard democracy,” he said, expressing distrust in corrupt politicians and military officials that is widespread among Burkinabè.

“A revolutionary organization is needed,” said Bill Fletcher, a longtime leader of TransAfrica Forum and today the host of “The Global African” program on teleSUR English. Without that, he said, “somebody or something will fill in. The military can never substitute for popular organizations because they’re trained by the old regime.”

The fight to open political space and build a revolutionary party is the task before the Burkinabè toilers, said Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press. “Getting rid of the old is the easy part, but the class structures of power, both national and international, that kept Compaoré in place remain.”

“The unity of the ‘Compaoré must go!’ forces no longer exists,” Waters said. “What matters is not only who you are against, but what you are for, and that’s where the example of the Cuban Revolution becomes so important.”

Compaoré, who has now fled to Morocco, should be arrested and tried, said several participants during the animated discussion period that lasted for well over an hour. But differences over how that should be accomplished were part of the debate on imperialist domination of Africa today and how to fight it.

Yves Bambara, from Balai Citoyen in New York, called for pressure to be mounted on Washington and Paris to arrest Compaoré and try him in the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

Lagoke strongly and clearly disagreed. The ICC is an arm of imperialist power over African people, he said.



Militant/Ved Dookhun

Above, Oct. 30 mass protest in Burkina Faso leading to overthrow of President Blaise Compaoré. Below, at Washington, D.C., Nov. 15 forum cochairperson Mjiba Frehiwot holding book of speeches of Thomas Sankara, leader of 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso. Seated from left, panel members Mary-Alice Waters, Paul Sankara, Bill Fletcher and Heather Benno.

“I’m tired of seeing African leaders brought to European cells — he should be tried in Africa.”

Unity in anti-imperialist struggle

“There are two struggles in Africa,” said another participant from the floor. “First there is the fight for the federation that Nkrumah talked about. We’re going to have a United States of Africa of 1 billion people. But if you don’t capture the federation’s state power,” he said, addressing the Africans in the room, “the capitalists will be in charge.”

Kwame Nkrumah, leader of Ghana from its independence in 1957 until 1966, along with Ahmed Sékou Touré, president of Guinea-Conakry from its independence in 1958 until 1984, put forward the perspective of a united federation of African nations to stand up to imperialist domination. Several currents that were part of the meeting trace their political roots to the pan-Africanist outlook of the two leaders.

African unity in itself does not advance the interests of the exploited, argued Fletcher. “The uprising in Burkina Faso may inspire other movements in Africa, but revolutions can only be fought for and decided based on the specific set of conditions in a given country,” he said.

Paul Sankara, a member of the Committee Against Impunity in Burkina Faso and brother of Thomas Sankara, said the Burkina Faso Revolution went beyond Africa and Africans. “Thomas said we are the heirs of all revolutions. We don’t just work with Blacks, we work with Indians, whites, Chinese and whoever else we share goals with.”

“Lasting unity can only be forged in the course of revolutionary struggles by the toilers,” Waters said. “It will not precede them. Unity can only be based on common class interests.”

“Those fighting U.S. imperialism are also on the streets of Ferguson,” said Heather Benno, representing the ANSWER Coalition and the Party for Socialism and Liberation. “Our struggle is to take action against the U.S. war machine from Ferguson to *la frontera* to Gaza to Baghdad to Ouagadougou — we must be free.”

Addressing the large portion of the audience who were West African immigrants now working in the U.S., Waters said, “It’s important to understand that

your contributions to the class struggle here are part of strengthening the combativity, capacity and resistance of working people in the U.S. and broadening the historical and cultural horizons of us all.” The best way to prepare for the future, whether in Burkina Faso or the U.S., Waters said, “is to work together to build the conscious, fighting, disciplined, political working-class movement necessary not only to destroy the old but to transform ourselves as we fight for that new world Sankara led the way toward.”

Sankara’s revolutionary legacy

“Sankara taught us to trust ourselves, to fight for justice and to reach out in solidarity to others,” said Windbale Dawouda, 37, a recent immigrant from Burkina Faso who joined the Pioneers youth group at age 10 during the revolution.

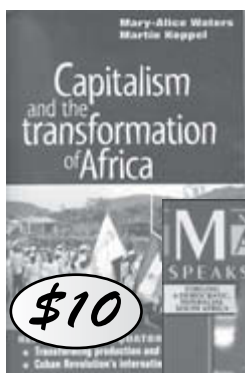
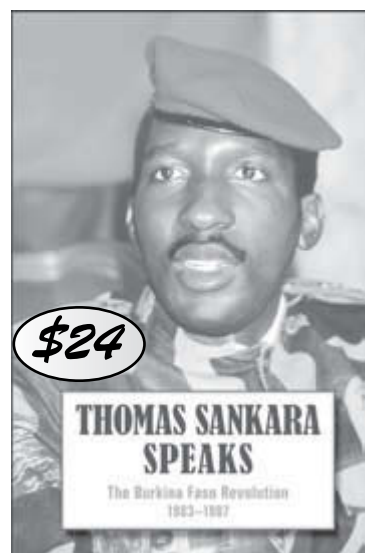
What distinguished Sankara among other African leaders, Waters noted, “was that he was a Marxist and a communist. He did not reject Marxism as a set of European ideas alien to Africa. He understood it as a course of struggle that drew on the lessons of successes and failures of past revolutions worldwide.”

A good number of participants were carrying books of Sankara speeches published by Pathfinder Press — *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution, 1983-1987*; *We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions*; and *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* — from which Frehiwot quoted frequently as she chaired the gathering.

The meeting was endorsed by the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party, ANSWER Coalition, Friends of the Congo, Institute for Policy Studies, Le Balai Citoyen-USA, Mouvement du Peuple pour le Progres-USA, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Revival of Panaficanism Forum, and the Socialist Workers Party.

During the discussion period and at the dinner after the program, many said they would like to see more such activities in the future. “Hearing about the meeting from those of us who attended has inspired Balai Citoyen members in New York to do more,” Arouna Saniwidi, U.S. organizer of the group, told the *Militant* a few days later. The D.C. meeting was an important first step.

Recommended reading ...



Books on Africa, Cuba & revolutionary struggles worldwide

pathfinderpress.com

Cuba's fight against Ebola is a 'source of inspiration'

'Proof that better world is possible' say Cuban Five

BY SETH GALINSKY

"You're writing another page in the courage, dignity, and solidarity of our people and its revolution," Antonio Guerrero said in a message on behalf of the Cuban Five to doctors and nurses in Havana on their way to Sierra Leone Oct. 2, the first contingent of Cuban volunteers heading to West Africa to combat Ebola. "You're proof that a better world is possible."

The 256 volunteers now in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Conakry are viewed as heroes in Cuba as are the Cuban Five, who were arrested by the FBI and framed-up in the United States in 1998. The five — Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, René González and Fernando González — were gathering information on right-wing groups in Florida to prevent them from carrying out violent attacks on Cuba. (See box below.)

"From an unjust imprisonment that has lasted more than 16 years, I look at you and I am filled with the strength and pride of being Cuban," Guerrero said.

Guerrero's message and a recent exchange of letters between Hernández and one of the Cuban doctors in Sierra Leone show how the internationalist volunteers in West Africa and the Cuban Five inspire each other and strengthen the proletarian moral values of Cuba's socialist revolution.

"Since we heard the news of the departure of the Cuban medical brigades to West Africa to combat the Ebola epidemic, we have tried to stay informed about the extraordinary work that our compatriots have been doing," Hernández wrote Rotceh Ríos Molina, a doctor from Jaruco in Cuba's western Mayabeque province, Nov. 24.

"On more than a few occasions over the years, we Five have been asked what has inspired us to resist this un-

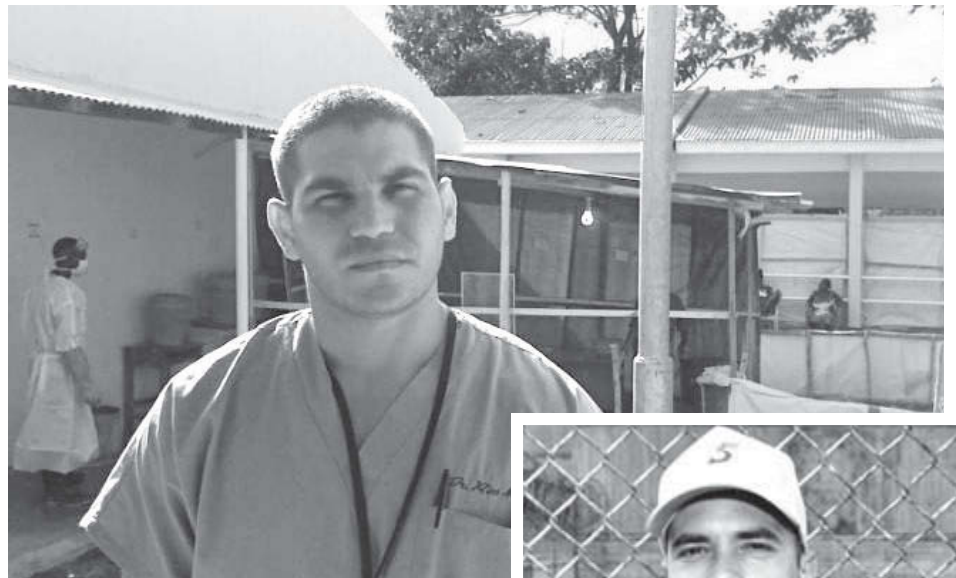
just imprisonment for so long, so far from Cuba and family," Hernández wrote. "Even before the Ebola crisis we've always mentioned the doctors and other Cuban internationalists as an important source of encouragement, pride and inspiration."

"Now, with this extraordinary lesson in heroism that you are giving the world, we are even prouder, and there are no words to express how much you strengthen us by your example," he added. "I know that one day, when you have won that battle for the benefit of humanity, and when justice has been done for the Five, we will have the opportunity to embrace in our country."

The letter from Hernández and a reply by Ríos the next day, was the result of an initiative by Marlene Caboverde Caballero, a journalist at the local radio station Radio Jaruco. Upon learning that a doctor from Jaruco was one of the volunteers in Sierra Leone, Caboverde decided to find a way to put the two in touch with each other. She asked Alicia Jrapko, of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5, headquartered in Oakland, California, to help. Jrapko maintains regular communication with Hernández and visits him periodically at the Victorville, California, prison.

"Jaruco is a very small town and the children of Marlene and Rotceh went to the same school," Jrapko said by phone Dec. 1. "Marlene is always thinking about how to write stories that show the human side. The Cuban doctors in Africa, they're really considered heroes in Cuba. So she wanted to connect two heroes. Ríos Molina is risking his life to save lives, the same as Gerardo was doing."

"I hope this connection helps to strengthen the 165 Cuban collaborators who are defying death every sec-



Cuban internationalists in Africa combating Ebola are heroes in Cuba, as are the Cuban Five, imprisoned in U.S. for gathering information on groups carrying out attacks against Cuban Revolution. Cuban volunteer Dr. Rotceh Ríos Molina, above, in Sierra Leone. Inset, Gerardo Hernández, one of Cuban Five, in prison in California.



ond in Sierra Leone as well as those who are working in the other West African countries ravaged by Ebola," Caboverde said on the Cuba Debate

website about the exchange.

Ríos readily agreed to the proposal. He wrote Caboverde that "it will be an honor for me to get to know a real fighter of our time."

Hernández's words "inspire us to stay focused on the mission of saving and bettering lives in these remote locations that have been battered by the great scourges of hunger, immense poverty, illiteracy, the exploitation of man by man and war," Ríos wrote Nov. 25. "Because of their example we will not only be able to accomplish this, but to always remain firm and do whatever it takes to keep moving forward. I note that this is not only from me, but from all of us who were moved by his words, so much so that we were shouting revolutionary slogans. We take as a given our victorious return home."

Why are the human rights of the Cuban 5 being denied?

Speakers: *Fernando González*, one of the Cuban 5 (via video); *Rafael Cancel Miranda*, Puerto Rican Independence leader (via video); *Zafar Bangash*, director, Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought; *Wafy Ibrahim*, chair, Lebanese Committee for the Cuban Five; *Dr. Hassan Jouni*, member of Lebanese Committee for the Cuban Five executive.

Exhibition of art by Antonio Guerrero and Gerardo Hernández. Live music.

Wed., Dec. 10, 6:30 p.m.
Toronto, Canada
Beit Zatoun Cultural Centre
612 Markham St.

Organized by: Toronto Forum on Cuba

Cuban Five campaign draws interest at Montreal book fair

BY ANNETTE KOURI
AND JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Pathfinder's new French-language book *Je mourrai comme j'ai vécu* (I Will Die the Way I've Lived), 15 prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five, was the best-selling title at the Pathfinder booth at the *Salon de livre de Montreal* Nov. 19-24. The annual event, one of the largest French-language book fairs in the world, was attended by more than 100,000 people.

Twelve participants purchased the book, which brings to life the 17 months the five Cuban revolutionaries spent in the hole in the Federal Detention Center in Miami after they were framed up and jailed by the U.S. government more than 16 years ago — and the creativity and humor with which they and others resist. Millions of working people around the world who have been in prison or know people who have will identify with their struggle.

The book includes explanations of the paintings by Guerrero and the other two of the Five who are still imprisoned, Gerardo Hernández and Ramón Labañino.

Visitors to the booth bought 13 subscriptions to the *Militant*, several taking advantage of the half-price book spe-

cials offered with a subscription. Fifty-two books by Pathfinder on revolutionary working-class politics were sold.

Some 700 people picked up the 2015 brochure that highlights the three French-language books on the Cuban Five published by Pathfinder, including the soon to be released *Voix Depuis la Prison: Les Cinq Cubains* (Voices from Prison: The Cuban Five). The new book will be available at the Haiti International Book Fair in Port-au-Prince Dec. 11-14.

The ousting of dictator Blaise Compaoré by popular demonstrations in Burkina Faso in West Africa Oct. 31 spurred interest in books by Thomas Sankara, the assassinated leader of the 1983-87 revolution there. Seven books by Sankara were sold, including four copies of *Thomas Sankara Parle* (Thomas Sankara Speaks), which contains 30 of his speeches.

"It's important to learn more about the events and people in history who have contributed to the development of the society we know today," said Jonathan Gervais, a young warehouse worker who purchased seven books including five on the Cuban revolution. "We have to understand the world we're living in, in order to build a better one."

Who are the Cuban Five?



Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the Five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with "conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information."

A growing international campaign is fighting for the release of Hernández, Labañino and Guerrero.

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government's 1996 shoot-down of two Brothers to the Rescue planes that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana's repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013 and Fernando González on Feb. 28 this year.

Fidel Castro: ‘We shall defend Angola and Africa!’

Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own is of one Pathfinder’s Books of the Month. Between 1975 and 1991 some 425,000 Cubans volunteered for duty in response to requests from the Angolan government to help defend the newly independent country against invasions from South Africa’s white-supremacist regime, backed by Washington. This piece is from a speech by Fidel Castro given to a mass rally of more than 1 million in Havana in December 1975. Copyright © 2013 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FIDEL CASTRO

... And now it is Angola that is the source of friction. The imperialists seek to prevent us from aiding our Angolan brothers. But we must tell the Yankees to bear in mind that we are a Latin-American nation and a Latin-African nation as well. [Prolonged applause]

African blood flows freely through our veins. [Applause] Many of our ancestors came as slaves from Africa to this land. As slaves they struggled a great deal. They fought as members of the Liberating Army of Cuba. We’re brothers and sisters of the people of Africa and we’re ready to fight on their behalf! [Applause]

Racial discrimination existed in our country. Is there anyone who doesn’t



Verde Olivo

“Yankee imperialism has launched South African mercenary troops in an attempt to crush Angola’s independence and is now outraged by our help to Angola and our defense of Africa,” said Fidel Castro at 1975 mass rally. Above, Castro discussed military situation in Angola, 1976.

know this, who doesn’t remember it? Many public parks had separate walks for blacks and for whites. Is there anyone who doesn’t recall that African descendants were barred from many places, from recreation centers and schools? Is there anyone who has forgotten that racial discrimination was prevalent in all aspects of work and study?

And, today, who are the representatives, the symbols of the most hateful and inhuman form of racial discrimination? The South African fascists and racists. And Yankee imperialism, without scruples of any kind, has launched South African mercenary troops in an attempt to crush Angola’s independence and is now outraged by our help to Angola, our support for Africa and our defense of Africa. In keeping with the duties rooted in our principles, our ideology, our convictions and our very own blood, we shall defend Angola and Africa! [Applause and shouts of “Cuba, Angola, united they will win!”] And when we say defend, we mean it in the strict sense of the word. And when we say struggle, we mean it also in the strict sense of the word. [Applause]

Let the South African racists and the Yankee imperialists be warned. We are part of the world revolutionary movement, and in Africa’s struggle against racists and imperialists, we’ll stand, without any hesitation, side by side with the peoples of Africa. [Applause]

Only cynics would dare to condemn our support for Angola while marching upon that heroic people shoulder to shoulder with South African fascists; South Africa, a region where three million whites oppress 14 million blacks, wants to impose its policy on Rhodesia [Zimbabwe since 1979], as it is doing, and on the rest of black Africa. But black Africa will not stand for it, will not tolerate it. Imperialists and reactionaries underestimate the peoples; mercenaries are in the habit of doing as they please, of marching in with their tanks and cannon to overwhelm defenseless people. They’ve already tried it here in Girón, and that’s just what they’re trying to do in Angola. But Angolans are not

1. On December 20, 1975, President Gerald Ford threatened to end US-Cuban talks about family visits and other steps to normalize US-Cuban relations, saying that “the action by the Cuban Government in sending combat forces to Angola destroys any opportunity for improvement of relations with the United States.” At a January 15, 1976, press conference, Cuban President Fidel Castro responded: “It is not that Cuba reject[s] the ideal of improving relations with the United States. ... What we do not accept are humiliating conditions — the absurd price that the United States apparently would have us pay for an improvement of relations.” The talks ended in February 1976.

defenseless! [Applause]

And [US president] Ford is complaining. Ford is hurling threats. Not really threats. He is just saying that the hypothetical and abstract possibilities of improving relations will be canceled! Ford should instead apologize to the Revolutionary Government of Cuba for the scores of assassination attempts prepared by the CIA for many years against various leaders of the Revolution. [Applause]

The Government of Cuba has the right to expect explanations from the imperialist government of the United States and to receive apologies for the horrendous and macabre assassination attempts plotted against leaders of the Cuban Revolution, attesting to their degree of civilization, or rather their degree of barbarity, and showing their true colors as criminals. They have put technology and science at the service of murder. And for years on end, in an unscrupulous, foul and indecent manner, that government has dedicated itself to planning the assassination of revolutionary Cuban leaders.

What we want from Ford is not the cancelation of his hypothetical hopes or possibilities for an improvement of relations with Cuba, but apologies for the shameful, hateful, and disgraceful crimes which the Government of the United States prepared against leaders of the Cuban Revolution. [Applause and shouts of “Fidel, hit the Yankees hard!”]

Our people have never failed to fulfill their internationalist commitment. Our people have maintained a policy consistent with their principles throughout their history.

What do the imperialists think? Do they think that since we are interested in social and economic progress we are going to sell out [Shouts of “No!”] in exchange for their purchase of a little bit of sugar and sale of cheap goods? [Shouts of “No!”] What do the imperialists think? Don’t they realize that the world is changing and that the times of blackmail and impositions on this country are over? This country on which they imposed the Platt Amendment, as well as scores of turncoats and treacherous rulers. Are they going to impose something else on this country, where a revolution has triumphed? No!

December

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

25% DISCOUNT

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Ferguson decision protested

Continued from front page

grand jury decision, but it's what I expected," Rodney Martin, a worker at Home Depot, told the *Militant*. "This is a recurring thing. It's been going on for decades. The problem is the law that says when police can use deadly force. They know they can use deadly force and easily justify it."

The grand jury decision did not come as a surprise to many, and was foreshadowed by evidence and testimony leaked to the media, as well as explanations of Missouri law, which, as in other states, is crafted to make it difficult to indict cops, who invariably claim to kill in self-defense.

Before the decision, Gov. Jay Nixon deployed 700 National Guard troops into the Ferguson area. Alongside peaceful protests following the decision, small groups took part in acts of arson, looting and vandalism, giving the governor a pretext to increase the number to 2,200.

"The protesters are not responsible for the looting or the arson," Markese Mull, a neighbor of Brown's mother Lesley McSpadden, told the *Militant*. "The places burned and looted are where a lot of people in this area shop and work. And it played right into the hands of the government and the media that wanted to paint a negative picture of us."

"I'm not with the riots, but I feel like I'm exploding inside," Gwen Carr, mother of Eric Garner, whose death while being put in a chokehold by Staten Island cop Daniel Pantaleo in July was caught on video, told the *Staten Island Advance*. A special grand jury is still deliberating on whether to indict Pantaleo for killing Garner during an argument after Pantaleo accosted

Garner for allegedly selling untaxed cigarettes.

"I wouldn't want to see that violence here," Carr said, referring to Ferguson.

Media reports during the grand jury deliberations included a toxicology report that Brown had marijuana in his system; evidence that he stole cigars earlier that day; testimony from several witnesses that he initially scuffled with Wilson before the cop shot him; and widely differing accounts over whether Brown was moving toward Wilson, and if so, how fast and from what distance.

"Does Mike Brown's drug history or the other stuff they used to discredit him matter?" T.K. Smith, a library worker who joined hundreds of others to protest in St. Louis the day after the grand jury decision, told the *Militant*. "No. He did not deserve to be shot and killed like that."

All the documents presented to the St. Louis County grand jury, along with transcripts of its proceedings, have now been made public. Witnesses describe Michael Brown as a young man well-liked and known for helping others in the neighborhood, but prone to a youthful recklessness familiar to many.

Wilson spoke about animosity toward cops in a predominantly Black working-class town with a long history of police harassment and brutality. "That community doesn't like the police," he said.

Grand jury transcripts show that government prosecutors, and sometimes unnamed jurors, often treated Wilson's account as truth without challenge, while taking issue with every detail of area witnesses who contradicted him. Among those was



Militant/Wendy Lyons

Hundreds join protest in Los Angeles day after grand jury decision to not indict police officer who killed Michael Brown. Demonstrators also protested local cases of police killings.

Dorian Johnson, who was with Brown throughout the confrontation and several hours beforehand.

Johnson acknowledges the shoplifting incident, as well as mouthing off to Wilson when the officer ordered them to get out of the middle of the street. He describes Wilson backing his vehicle up and blocking their path.

According to Johnson's testimony, Wilson, still seated in the car, initiated an altercation by grabbing Brown by his shirt collar. Brown then struggled to pull free.

According to Wilson, Brown pummeled him with "Hulk Hogan" strength as he sat in the squad car and tried to grab his gun. Johnson and Wilson testified that Wilson fired the first of 12 shots while sitting in the squad car. That shot struck Brown in the right hand. Brown fled and Wilson pursued him.

According to Wilson and one other witness, Brown then turned around and charged the officer, who had his gun trained on him. Most witnesses

said Brown was moving slowly toward Wilson, giving up. Some of these later recanted, saying they weren't there or didn't really know.

Either way, Wilson let loose two final multiple-shot volleys. The last two shots were fired as Brown was slumping forward — one struck in the right eye; the other, the top of the head.

No one can dispute Wilson shot an unarmed 18-year-old dead. And because Wilson convinced the grand jury that he feared for his life, his actions were legal under Missouri law.

"We have to continue the fight," Mark Esters, president of the St. Louis chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, told the *Militant* at the march. "It's important to express our outrage at the decision not to indict Wilson. Mike Brown's death is an issue for all labor."

Protests against the shooting of Michael Brown continue. As part of a day of student actions drawing thousands across the country, hundreds of high school students from three schools in the Ferguson-Florissant district walked out of school chanting and marching Dec. 2. Many teachers joined in.

Regime moves to silence Crimean Tatars

Continued from front page

ers from the peninsula for five years, organized armed raids on Tatar activists' homes, offices and mosques, shut down Tatar news media and arrested or "disappeared" Tatar militants.

The Crimean Tatars were first subjugated by the invading armies of the Russian empire in 1763. This changed with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which opened the door to Crimean self-determination as part of the voluntary Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. For about a decade, the Tatars' culture flourished under the Crimeanization policy of the Bolshevik Party led by Vladimir Lenin.

But these gains were reversed as part of a counterrevolution as a growing privileged layer in the government bureaucracy led by Joseph Stalin consolidated control over the Soviet Union and Communist Party. Tatar leaders were among millions arrested or killed by the Stalinist murder machine.

During World War II, Stalin moved to deport the entire Tatar people, branding them wholesale as Nazi collaborators. Packed into boxcars and shipped to Uzbekistan, Siberia and the Urals, nearly half of them died. The Stalinist regime organized to "Russify" Crimea, granting land to new Russian settlers. Few Tatars were able to return to their homeland until after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Today there are some 270,000 Tatars in Crimea.

"In the past eight months, the de facto authorities in Crimea have limited free expression, restricted peaceful assem-

bly, and intimidated and harassed those who have opposed Russia's actions," according to a Nov. 17 Human Rights Watch report. "In particular the authorities have targeted the Crimean Tatar community."

When Dzhemilev attempted to enter Crimea on May 3, he was met at the border by 5,000 Tatars. Dozens have been victimized on frame-up charges since. A demonstration called by the Mejlis for May 18, the anniversary of the mass deportation of the Tatars, was banned. In response, Crimean Tatars staged a successful rally in a different location.

Under the pretense of looking for "drugs, weapons and prohibited literature," authorities, accompanied by armed and masked thugs, have ransacked mosques, Islamic schools and dozens of private homes.

Authorities use armed paramilitary groups, the report says, "in enforced

disappearances, beatings, and in at least one case, the torture of pro-Ukraine activists" and Tatars.

The *New York Times* reports that some 4,000 businesses, organizations and agencies have been expropriated by the Moscow-installed regime, including many belonging to Crimean Tatars and members of the Ukrainian and Greek branches of the Orthodox Church.

The Mejlis, "by far the loudest voice against Russian annexation," the *Times* said, "was ousted from the building it rents." The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has had 11 of its 18 parishes shuttered.

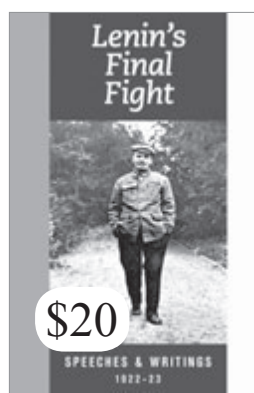
Dzhemilev announced at a meeting of SOS Crimea in Kiev Nov. 25 that he is working to launch a news network to reach occupied Crimea. His goal, he said, was to get the truth out, but also to ensure that "the Crimea issue not fall off the pages of the Ukrainian and international press."

"I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism."

In 1922 and 1923 Lenin waged his last political battle. At stake was whether the revolution would remain on the proletarian course that had brought workers and peasants to power.

Lenin's Final Fight
Speeches and Writings: 1922-23
by V.I. Lenin

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DC Walmart

Continued from page 4

numbering around 40 to 50 people, gathered at the Georgia Avenue location, chanting and passing out flyers to customers.

"We need a change, a rip tide" said John Blair, 26, from Newport News, Virginia. After five years of working at Walmart, Blair makes \$8.85 per hour. Three strikers went into the break room and handed out flyers to fellow workers there.

One of the strikers, Glova Scott, who works at the H Street store, was quoted in the Nov. 26 Huffington Post:

"She has already called in to her store and told them she won't be coming in this week. Scott said she's been working for Walmart for a little over a year but just joined OUR Walmart a week and a half ago. Fifty-nine years old, she earns \$10.90 an hour stocking shelves on the night shift.

"It's hard. We work in an atmosphere where the pay doesn't make ends meet, and a lot of my co-workers think the solution is to look for another job rather than try to improve conditions," said Scott. "I joined because I wanted to be part of a movement. I'm looking forward to going back to work and encouraging my co-workers to join me."

Ned Measel is an overnight stocker at Walmart. Glova Scott and Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.